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WESLEY AND GOETHE

BY

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CHAPTER I

The Eighteenth Century

It is natural that historians whose pages are filled with the pomp of war and the pageantry of kings should regard the eighteenth century as a barren one. The great battles of the Reformation had been fought, and the struggles of modern life had not begun. The Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648, and the French Revolution did not break out until 1789. Louis the XIV, *Le grand Monarque,* had been succeeded by mere puppets with royal titles. Macaulay's noble hero, the Prince of Orange, had been followed by Anne and the three Georges. "Never," says a writer in the *North British Review,* "has century risen on Christian England so void of soul

and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne, and reached its misty noon beneath the second George—a dewless night, succeeded by a sunless dawn. There was no freshness in the past, and no promise in the future." Aristocratic government was effete and modern institutions were not founded. The Schoolmen had disappeared and the scientists had not come. The Puritans were buried and the Methodists were not born.

But the eighteenth century can be called barren, only as the month of April, when indeed the harvest is not apparent, but when the seed is germinating in the soil, is barren. Surely the one hundred years which witnessed the appearance of Goethe in literature, and Kant in philosophy, and Humboldt, Cuvier, and Franklin in science, Wilberforce in reform, Blackstone in law, Washington and Jefferson and Hamilton in statesmanship, Handel and Beethoven in music, Frederick the Great and Napoleon in war, Voltaire in skepticism. and Wesley

in religion, can not be called a barren age. If these men did not appear early enough to make notable the century in which they lived, they molded the generations which followed them. Goethe is the king of modern culture. Kant and his great disciple, Hegel, dominate modern philosophy as Aristotle and Plato the ancient. Humboldt is the earliest of our modern scientists, and Franklin the forerunner of American inventors. The agnosticism and pessimism of the present have produced no mocker equal to Voltaire, while we must go back to the age of Luther, if not to that of Paul, for a religious period which has produced the equal of John Wesley.

The very lack of historic events cited in proof of the barrenness of the age makes the century all the more valuable to those who were born into it. They were not thrown into a current of outward affairs which bore them irresistibly along. They were called upon to solve anew the fundamental problems of the race: What is the

origin of the globe? what the destiny of man? and what the true plan of life?

Six representative men appeared, and gave six varying answers. Napoleon brought into the modern world the old theory that selfishness is the true plan of life. The solution belongs to the infancy of the race. But Napoleon carried out his theory with such tremendous energy, and won such striking success at first, that, like Lucifer, he dazzles us by his fall. Napoleon fell at the second temptation: "Then Satan took him up into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and all the glory of them, and said, All these will I deliver unto thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Napoleon fell before the glittering prize. And God saw that he who had trampled under foot the freedom of France, and the rights of sister nations, and his love of Josephine, for the sake of power, would not wield the universal scepter he craved for the good of humanity. So God used Napoleon as a rod of

iron to break in pieces the despotisms of the Old World, and then God set the rod aside.

Napoleon saw, when too late, the higher platform on which he might have stood. He bore witness at last to the radical difference between Christ's theory of life and his own. "I know men," he said on St. Helena, "and Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires," he continued, "but that resemblance does not exist. Alexander and Cæsar and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love. And to-day, while my armies have forgotten me, millions would die for him. What an abyss between my misery and the eternal reign of Christ!" Worldliness will not satisfy the soul.

Voltaire, with a keener mind than Napoleon's, but without his strength of will, saw the emptiness of mere earthly success. But he lacked the spiritual insight to see

the moral grandeur of the universe. So he declared the problem of life insoluble, became the agnostic of his age, the incarnation of mockery and denial. Voltaire had at least some provocation for his criticism of the Church, because the Church as he knew her—the Roman Catholic Church in France in the eighteenth century—was corrupt and oppressive; and he battled nobly in behalf of freedom in the cases of Calas and Serven. Had Voltaire only been willing to follow the light as it dawned upon him, he might have become the Luther of France, and changed the course of history in his native land. But because Voltaire lacked genuine honesty and the moral strength to practice the self-restraint and purity which Christianity enjoins, he became a skeptic rather than a reformer. He was a profound egotist withal, and anticipated the disappearance of Christianity in the nineteenth century, and the apotheosis of himself as her destroyer. How clearly he forecast the future may be seen in the doubling of the

followers of Christ since Voltaire's attack. Voltaire did not find peace in skepticism. At sixty-six he built a church at Ferney, and put this inscription upon it: "Voltaire erects this to God." At eighty-four he signed a paper, and sent it to a bishop, asking God for forgiveness and expressing a desire to die in the Church. During his last illness he sent for the priests twice; and two of them stood at his bedside during his closing hours. Voltaire found no peace in mockery.

It would be interesting to compare the solutions of Kant and Humboldt; the former, by a restatement of philosophy; the latter, by the discovery of the new world of science. Kant thought the soul could be satisfied by the knowledge of the truth, and by a life in conformity therewith. Humboldt thought that the satisfaction of the soul would arise from the conquest of the external world and the advancement of the race in science and inventions. These two methods of solving the riddle of life have

been projected into our modern world; and the philosophers and the scientists are still contending in the field.

Wesley and Goethe did not abandon the problem as insoluble, with Voltaire; nor did they, with Napoleon, adopt the vulgar solution of the worldling. They did not aim, with Humboldt, to make an external conquest of nature; or, with Kant, to master the realm of metaphysical truth. Wesley, indeed, gave the world some important principles of Christian experience and wrought profound changes in society. So Goethe contributed to the advancement of his native land through literature. But while external results are the natural outcome of spiritual culture, outward achievement was not the aim of either of these great minds; they lifted the struggle for the conquest of the world up to the spiritual plane; each aimed at the perfection of the human soul, not at the conquest of the external world.

With this generic agreement, there were wide specific differences. Goethe is the apos-

tle of self-culture. Wesley preached salvation by grace through faith. Goethe strove for wisdom through intellectual speculation, or through the experiences of self-indulgence. Wesley sought truth through the obedience of the will to Christ. Goethe's spiritual progress was slow, culminating in his intellectual acceptance of Christ when he was between sixty-five and eighty; and even then he did not fully surrender his will to Christ. Wesley's spiritual progress was rapid, culminating in his full consecration to Christ at twenty-two, and in his discovery of the true plan of salvation at thirty-five. The agency through which Goethe expressed his convictions was literature. Wesley expressed his convictions through preaching, through institutions, and through books which were not literature. The dying Goethe shrank back into his great arm-chair, and cried to the servant as his eyes grew dim, "More light! more light!" The dying Wesley said to the friends who stood around his bed, "The best of all is, God is with us."

In these two men we are face to face primarily with a worldly philosophy, slowly approaching the cross upon the one side, and upon the other side with a Christian faith striving to bring the world to Christ. But we are also face to face with the English and the Germanic stock; we are studying the authors of our own intellectual and spiritual life, the chief forces which will mold Americans in the twentieth century. As the heirs of Goethe's culture and the spiritual children of John Wesley, let us study more fully these two leaders of our race.

CHAPTER II

John Wesley

JOHN WESLEY was born in 1703 and died in 1791. Oliver Wendell Holmes tells us that the first step to success is a wise selection of one's grandmother. Had John Wesley possessed the power of selecting his ancestors, he could not have made from the entire race a wiser selection for his mother, or probably for his father, or for his grandparents, or his great-grandparents. For three generations his ancestors on both sides had been noted for consecrated culture. His father was a clergyman, a man of education, and a reformer who was willing to suffer for his convictions. But Wesley owed even more to his mother than to his father. Her insight into truth, her rare common sense in the application of principles to the

practical affairs of life, and her combination of cheerfulness with unswerving devotion to duty, were reproduced in her illustrious son. Susannah Wesley was the mother of nineteen children. Despite her family cares she wrote out a complete body of moral and religious doctrine for her children, read sermons, and at times preached to her poor neighbors. Adam Clarke called her a very able divine, and said that he had never seen, heard, or read of her equal.

John Wesley was only five feet two inches in height and weighed about one hundred and twenty-five pounds when he attained his growth. We must not infer from the size of this body that he ever suffered from ill health. Despite his multitudinous labors, the greatest probably ever performed by one man; despite beginning his religious services at five o'clock on Sunday, and often preaching three and four times, and sometimes addressing audiences out of doors numbering twenty thousand people,—he could write in old age that he had not known

an hour's depression of spirits in half a century. His physical organization was well adapted to his tasks. He owed much to his ancestors on the physical as well as on the intellectual and moral side of his nature, and he owed still more to lifelong habits of temperance and self-control and godliness.

John Wesley had the advantage of remarkable training in infancy and boyhood. I have already remarked that Samuel and Susannah Wesley had nineteen children. (Roosevelt owes a wreath to Susannah Wesley's tomb.) Fourteen of these children grew to maturity. In a family of sixteen, order was a necessity. Hence the children were taught, when one year old, to fear the rod, and to cry softly if they cried at all. Each child was put to bed at eight o'clock, and on no occasion was a servant or an older brother or sister to sit by the child until it fell asleep. Rudeness was not known in this large family. One child was never permitted to call another child by its proper

name without the prefix, brother or sister. No home in England furnished a better illustration of genteel breeding and good manners than did that in which John Wesley was born and trained.

There was no public school in England at this time, and Samuel Wesley was unable to send his children to a private school or to hire a tutor for them. Hence Susannah Wesley, in addition to her other duties, spent six hours a day teaching her children; and she continued this home school, with the aid of the older children, for more than twenty years. Do you marvel at Adam Clarke's compliment? President Roosevelt's phrase, "the strenuous life," ought to have been invented two hundred years ago and applied to Susannah Wesley. No child was taken into the school until it was five years old, and he must then learn all the letters of the alphabet, large and small, in one day. Each child completed the task in the appointed time, save two sisters, who needed

an additional half day to learn the capital letters.

At ten years of age, John Wesley's father, through the influence of the Duke of Buckingham, secured him the appointment to the famous Charterhouse School, from which he passed to Oxford University at the age of seventeen. His promotion to Oxford was due to his scholarship and character, and the same high qualities procured him a fellowship at the end of his college course. The fellowship enabled him to remain at Oxford fifteen years in all, and to become intellectually the best-trained man of his age. What a rebuke is Wesley's thorough preparation to young men who crowd into the grave responsibilities of the twentieth century with one-half, or one-third, or one-fifth of Wesley's intellectual training! In long and patient preparation for his work, Wesley followed in the footsteps of Luther, who spent eight years at college; of Calvin, who spent ten years at

college; of Arminius, who gave fifteen years to college studies; of Paul, who remained at the College of Jerusalem until he was thirty years of age; and, above all, of the Master, who, although a Son endowed by his Heavenly Father with talents to confute his teachers at twelve, nevertheless passed through eighteen more years of discipline that he might learn obedience by the things which he endured.

But our chief concern in the story of John Wesley's life is in his religious progress. The conflicting views as to the date of Wesley's conversion are due in some measure to the fact that the man who guided the greatest emotional movement in religion since the Reformation was a man whose emotional nature was originally weaker than Darwin's and was never nourished into a normal and healthy life. So completely was Wesley a child of reason and not of feeling that when asked at the table in his boyhood if he would have certain food, he would often reply, "Thank you, I will think of it," and later

take or reject the food according to the reason then dominant in his mind. His unfortunate courtships and his more unfortunate married life show that his emotional nature never reached the stage of development when it became a safe complement of bare reason in the guidance of his conduct. Wesley's service to mankind is due to the fact that the greatest rationalist of his age recognized the presence of God in the greatest emotional movement of the modern Church, that the most methodical man of the eighteenth century guided to practical issues the most turbulent religious movement since the Reformation, that the Classicist in religion molded the extreme Romantic manifestation of Protestantism.

The difficulty in using Wesley's testimony as to the date of his conversion is due to the fact that his own opinions in regard to his religious life changed radically, and he was honest enough to write in his Journal or in his sermons exactly what he believed when he made the record. Undoubtedly

Wesley believed in his childhood that he was a Christian, and the Journal written in mature life still records that conviction. During his boyhood at the Charterhouse School and his youth at Oxford University, Wesley hoped that he was a saved person; and the Journal records the reasons for that hope. Mr. Tyerman and some other biographers think that Wesley was converted at twenty-two, when he accepted the call to the ministry; and undoubtedly this period marks a crisis in his life. After his experience at thirty-five, Wesley undoubtedly thought that he had not been a Christian previous to that experience. Indeed the Journal expresses doubts of his conversion seven months after that experience. When Wesley published the Journal in his old age he allowed the record to stand as originally written. But he added notes to the Journal correcting its denials of his Christian life down to his thirty-fifth year, and placing his entrance into the kingdom long before that date. Whether he finally placed the begin-

ning of his Christian life at twenty-two, or dated it back to his childhood, is not entirely clear, although I think his writings as a whole favor the latter view. From a study of his Journal, his letters, and his sermons, I am led to the conclusion that Wesley entered the kingdom in childhood and never surrendered a saving trust in Christ; that at twenty-two he consecrated his will fully to God and never abated that consecration during the remaining sixty-six years of his life; that at thirty-five he clearly apprehended, for the first time, the Protestant doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, and revealed a marvelous increase of peace and power through this experience. Let us consider the three stages in his experience a little more in detail.

1. Childhood Piety. The religious training of the family began by each child being taught the Lord's Prayer as soon as it could pronounce the words, and then trained to repeat the prayer morning and evening. The mother's heart seemed es-

pecially called out toward John through the burning of the rectory when he was five years old. The parents awoke in the night, and found the house in flames, and the father shouted to the children to escape for their lives. The children obeyed with more than the usual childhood alacrity, and at first it seemed that all of them were saved. But a hasty count was made, and John was found missing. His father ran into the house and started up the stairs, but was driven back by the flames. He fell upon his knees in the yard, and commended the child to God. Just then, John awoke in the chamber above, and ran to the window and cried for help. A neighbor placed himself against the wall, and another climbed on his shoulders and caught the boy in his arms as he jumped from the window and the walls of the rectory fell in. The rector called the family and the neighbors to kneel with him again, this time in thanksgiving that all the children had been saved, and especially that John had been plucked as a brand from the

burning. Susannah Wesley believed that John was saved in answer to prayer and for some providential work, and, like Mary of old, she kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The home school already described was opened and closed each day with the singing of a psalm. In addition to this religious exercise, each of the older children was trained to take one of the younger children at the close of the school and read to it the psalms appointed for the day, and an additional chapter from the Bible, and then the children were called to separate for private devotions. I doubt if any other family in England or in Europe during the eighteenth century maintained so orderly a household or so thorough a system of family instruction and family religion as was maintained by Susannah Wesley. The result is seen in this mother's gift to the world of the noblest religious reformer and the noblest religious poet whom the English race has thus far produced.

John Wesley responded in his childhood to his mother's religious teaching, and later he could not recall when he first became conscious of God's love. In his account of his religious life, found in his Journal, he writes, "Not until about the age of ten did I sin away the washing of the Holy Ghost which I received in baptism." This expression is a crude one, showing that, when Wesley wrote it, he believed in baptismal regeneration, and thought that he became a Christian at his baptism, which took place when he was only a few days old. But the entry is of great value, as it shows that Wesley was a conscious Christian from his earliest recollection down to the time when he was between ten and eleven years old. We have another and more intelligent testimony to Wesley's early Christian life from his mother. When John was eight years old his father went down to London. During the father's absence the lad was stricken with smallpox, which was prevalent in the neighborhood, and was very

virulent. A few days after the crisis Susannah Wesley wrote her husband, "Jack has borne his disease bravely like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without complaint." We have a stronger proof of the consistency of the boy's Christian life in the fact that the father, who was extremely rigid as to the conditions for communion, nevertheless admitted John to the communion-table from the time he was eight years old. This testimony of the father to John's Christian life is all the more striking, inasmuch as he did not admit the other children at that age, but only as each one of them became settled in the Christian life. John Wesley illustrates the Divine method of beginning the Christian life. Christ never was conscious of conversion; i. e., of the turning of his heart from self or the world to God. Christ never sinned. From his earliest consciousness down to the day of his ascension, his choices were in perfect submission to his Father's will. No human being has repeated the experience of

Jesus. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. No human being has passed a sinless childhood. Certainly Wesley, between the years of infancy and ten, fell into sins and into condemnation. But when he became conscious of his condemnation he turned back to God in penitence, just as every child turns to its mother in penitence when it becomes sorry for its disobedience. And John Wesley felt at once the sense of Divine forgiveness, just as many a child has become conscious of its mother's forgiveness when it has turned to her with a confession of its faults. In this regard, John Wesley's childhood experience illustrates the normal method of beginning the Christian life. It is true that Wesley did not maintain his childhood piety throughout his boyhood and youth. But at this point Wesley's example becomes a warning and not a guide. Isabella Thoburn was a Christian from her earliest recollection; and the crisis through which she passed in deciding to go to India as a mis-

sionary was made much easier for her through the maintenance of her childhood devotion. Theodore Cuyler says that he can not fix the date of his conversion. Frederick Merrick grew up loving God from his childhood and never knew the day of his conversion. It is strange that parents accepting the teachings of Christ and striving to train their children after his example, should fall into the dangerous heresy that these little ones can learn to serve God best by an apprenticeship to the devil, followed by a violent conversion. If ministers will preach the duty of prenatal consecration of children upon the part of parents, and the possibilities of childhood piety, and if parents will teach their children that they are also the children of God, made in his image, redeemed by the blood of Christ, visited by the Holy Spirit, and that they forfeit the privileges of children by their disobedience to the voice of the Spirit in their hearts, we shall save to the Church and to the kingdom in the twentieth century millions

more than our fathers saved in the nineteenth century.

2. The Crisis at Twenty-two. On going to the Charterhouse School at ten and one-half years of age, Wesley passed from the stage of childhood piety to that of boyhood independence and willfulness, followed by a loss of the consciousness of the Divine favor, but culminating, after an inward struggle, in a full consecration to God. In reviewing this boyhood period of his life in his Journal, Wesley says: "Outward restraints being removed, I was more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eyes of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures and said my prayers morning and evening. What I now hoped to be saved by was, first, not being so bad as other people; second, having still a kindness for religion; and third, reading the Bible and going to church and saying my

prayers." In another place in the Journal, Wesley gives the following account of his boyhood at the Charterhouse School and of his youth at Oxford University: "I still said my prayers, both in public and in private, and read with the Scriptures several other books on religion, especially comments on the New Testament. Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness, and went on habitually and, for the most part, very contentedly in the practice of some one or other known sin, though with some intermissions and short struggles, especially before and after the holy communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year." This somewhat severe condemnation of himself by Wesley is seized upon by some biographers as proof that Wesley became a flagrant backslider and sinner at the Charterhouse and during his early days at Oxford. But we must remember, first, that while Wesley condemns himself, he says distinctly that his sins were not scandalous in the eyes of the world;

second, that after Wesley's dedication of himself to God at the age of twenty-two, his piety became offensive to his fellow-students, and they opposed him with raillery and anger; but they never charged him with drunkenness, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, or any outward vice, committed before his conversion; third, that during his entire boyhood and youth Wesley maintained his daily habit of Bible-reading and of prayer; fourth, that Wesley's mother, to whom he wrote in the most perfect confidence and freedom during his entire life at the Charterhouse and at Oxford, advised him, near the close of his college course, to take orders for the ministry, showing that she did not think the boy had lost his religion; and in the fifth place, that, after consulting his father and mother, John Wesley himself expressed a desire to be ordained. A fair interpretation of all the facts, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that, while the boy was willful and probably indulged in some acts, and especially in thoughts and feelings, which

brought self-condemnation and led to spiritual coldness, he never "sowed wild oats" at college or ceased to be recognized as an acceptable communicant of the Church of England.

Upon the other hand, a candid reading of his letters and of his later descriptions of his state, shows that Wesley passed through a spiritual crisis at about twenty-two years of age. A close study of his life will, I think, reveal the fact that the struggle was between worldly ambition upon the one side, and a call to the ministry upon the other. Southey maintained that Wesley was ambitious, and Tyerman admits that, like all young men of great abilities, Wesley was ambitious, at least in the higher meaning of that term. John Wesley desired money enough to enable him to keep free from debt and to live comfortably, and, above all, he desired earthly fame. Both seemed to him, as a boy at the Charterhouse and as a young man at Oxford, impossible in the ministry. His father and both his grandfathers had

suffered lifelong poverty, and two at least of the three had been imprisoned during their ministerial careers, either for debt or for urging reforms obnoxious to the State or Church. The career of his ancestors and his own independence of judgment furnished him some intimations of the conflict which must arise between himself and the England of the eighteenth century, if he followed his convictions and became a fully-consecrated minister. The struggle in Wesley's case, as in the case of tens of thousands of young people, was chiefly an internal struggle. It was not between scandalous self-indulgence upon the one side and external morality upon the other. It was between a life of conformity to the world or to a worldly standard inside the Church and a life of perfect loyalty to his ideals. The restlessness, the study of the Bible, the reading of Jeremy Taylor and Thomas à Kempis, the letters to his mother, the careful observance of morning and evening prayer, and yet his sense of con-

demnation,—all indicate that the boy and the young man wanted to feel an assurance of his salvation upon the one hand, and, upon the other hand, wanted to have his own way. In a word, the battle was in the boy's soul. Two powers were struggling for the possession of the young collegian's will. The ideal picture of this struggle is found in the seventh chapter of Romans. Wesley's account of the experience through which he passed is as follows: "When I was about twenty-two, my father pressed me to enter into holy orders. At the same time the providence of God directed me to Thomas à Kempis's 'Christian's Pattern,' and I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as to our words and actions. I was angry at à Kempis for being too strict. Yet I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before. Meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had until

now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation and to enter in earnest upon a new life. I set aside an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at and pray for inward holiness." He writes of his experience a month or two later, when he is preparing himself for his ordination and is reading Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying:" "In reading several parts of this book I was exceedingly affected, by that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts and words and actions, being thoroughly convinced that there is no medium, but that every part of my life, not some only, must either be a sacrifice to God or else to myself, which is in effect to the devil."

These words mark a crisis in John Wesley's career. Such a crisis is inevitable in every human life, if that life rises much above the animal plane. Wesley's crisis was

preceded by Moses casting in his lot with a nation of slaves; by Isaiah responding to the vision of the lofty One; by Esther crying—"If I perish, I perish;" by Paul on the way to Damascus; by Augustine and Savonarola; by Wyclif and Luther and Knox, each saying in his heart, "What wilt thou have me to do, Lord?" It was succeeded by Judson behind the haystack at Williamstown, by Bushnell in the New Haven revival, by Brooks in the dreary days following his failure as a teacher. Such a crisis is not limited to the Christian faith. It was experienced by Mohammed, by Buddha, by Confucius. It is the earth-enduring struggle, summed up by the Master in the wilderness, between appetite and duty, between ambition and obedience, between a religious fanaticism which makes a spectacular display of self-sacrifice for the glorification of self and a sane devotion which casts itself upon the Infinite One in obedience to the laws of his universe. Any belief that evolution is not accompanied by crises

is contradicted by the history of our globe. Conversion is the normal experience of the human soul in the passage from its abnormal sinful state. Sanctification is the Divine call to millions inside the Church who continue in known sin to enter the dispensation of the Spirit and realize the promises of the New Testament. Any denial of conversion only reveals the skeptic's ignorance of the laws of human nature and the facts of human experience.

CHAPTER III

John Wesley—Continued

3. Discovery of Salvation by Grace at Thirty-five. In the crisis described above, Wesley has fully consecrated his will to God. But he has not yet found the New Testament Way of Life. From henceforth, however, he is fully obedient to the light he has. He at once accepts the call to the ministry, is ordained, and becomes curate of a small Church under his father's direction. It was a pastorate of intense earnestness on Wesley's part—earnestness so great as to awaken opposition, but without sufficient life or power to produce spiritual fruits. His father encourages him, but John is greatly puzzled over his lack of success. His splendid record in scholarship leads to his election as a

fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and to a tutorship in Greek, and Wesley gladly returns to the university. His religious earnestness, however, does not abate. He gathers round him a dozen of the most earnest young men of the university, and meets with them every evening for the study of the New Testament in Greek, for a mutual examination of their conduct, to see whether they have done, said, or thought anything evil during the day, and whether they have done all the good possible. Soon this little group of students began to talk to their fellows upon religion; and the other students nicknamed them the "Holy Club," and later, Methodists; and the latter nickname stuck. They began to visit the poor and the sick, and the prisoners in the surrounding jails. They practiced plain living and high thinking. Wesley, who now paid no tutors' fees, found himself able to live on twenty-eight pounds, or one hundred and forty dollars a year, and he gave away the balance of his fellowship, amounting to

one hundred and sixty dollars a year. Later, when his income at the university grew to seven hundred dollars a year, he still lived on one hundred and forty dollars and gave away the remaining four-fifths. Despite raillery, and indeed the opposition of some students and teachers, Wesley continued his evening meetings every night for seven years. During this time he was an earnest student in philosophy and in history, and his study of the New Testament in Greek, with his leadership of the class of young men, made him so familiar with that book that, down to his dying day, if ever he forgot a passage in English, he could recall it in the original and then translate it for immediate use. Of the twenty or thirty students whom Wesley trained in the Christian life during these seven years, all save one proved useful and godly men, while five or six will forever occupy a high position in the Christian Church. Three of them became tutors at Oxford. Ingham became one of the greatest evangelists

which the English Church has ever possessed. James Hervey will be loved as long as men appreciate the finest type of Christian piety embodied in the most mellifluent English prose. Whitefield became the greatest evangelist of the ages, and Charles Wesley the greatest hymn-writer in the Christian Church.

But despite Wesley's splendid services at the university, and his ascetic living, he has not regained the joyous experience of his childhood. There are promises in the Bible both of power and of peace which he does not realize. The consecration of his will made Wesley a servant of God and a religious man; but he has not apprehended the New Testament teaching of salvation by grace through faith. He worships God in spirit, but not in truth. He is a servant, but not a son; a religious man, but not a Christian in the highest sense of the word. He is in the kingdom, but he does not know how to lay hold of his inheritance as an heir of

God. He is still conscious of a lack of spiritual peace and perfect satisfaction. He contends for the possibility "of the Christian being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh, and being so renewed in the image of his mind as to be perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect." But while Wesley argues for perfection on paper, he can not realize it in his life. He thinks his difficulty is due to a lack of consecration, and, like Loyola and Buddha, he resolves to make every external surrender and to perform every external service. Meantime, his study of the New Testament led him to see that God meant this world to be evangelized, and Wesley now decides upon a step which, in the judgment of his friends, will prove a living burial of himself. During his seven years as fellow and tutor, Wesley has stirred the great university profoundly; and his fame as a scholar and a saint had begun to spread through the little island. But Wesley now resolves to set sail for Georgia as a missionary to the Indians.

He is practical even in his sacrifices, and selects Georgia because, along with the Indians, he hopes to reach the Negroes and the whites, and thus touch three races with his toil. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, there is no missionary society in the Church, and Wesley is obliged to find a patron, and he goes out in an expedition under Lord Oglethorpe. On his way to Georgia, Wesley lives abstemiously, converses with and argues against some Moravians who talk to him of salvation by grace, labors for the conversion of the seamen, and rebukes Lord Oglethorpe for losing his temper with his men. Once in Georgia, Wesley fasts often, lives upon a vegetable diet, sleeps upon a board, and goes barefoot to encourage poor children to come to church. Disappointment in a love affair drives him to still greater asceticism. We now approach the most critical period in Wesley's life, next to the deliberate surrender of his will to God at twenty-two. He is religious, but not a Christian.

He is walking in the path of Loyola and Hildebrand, of Buddha and Confucius; the path in which Luther and Paul once walked; the path in which Lucretius and Francis Newman walked; the path in which John Henry Newman and Cardinal Manning walked. One of three solutions is inevitable. Like Lucretius and Francis Newman and J. A. Froude, he may abandon the problem as insoluble and become a skeptic; or, like John Henry Newman and Loyola and Hildebrand, he may lower the standard of perfection to meet our human strength, and strive to reach sainthood through good works; or, like Paul and Luther, he may abandon the hope of salvation through personal saintliness and accept it as a free gift of God through faith.

Wesley was too earnest a soul to abide in skepticism. He had, indeed, sought salvation through good works, and followed in the footsteps of the ascetics for years. But his sacrifices as a missionary proved as ineffectual to secure spiritual peace as his

fifteen years of study at Oxford; and Wesley was too honest and clear-minded, he had too much of the scientific spirit, to deceive himself on this point. He had often met the Moravians in Georgia, but their doctrine had not yet appealed to him. So he set sail for London, writing the sad confession in his Journal: "I went out to convert the Indians; but, O, who will convert me? Alienated as I am from the life of God, I am a child of wrath and an heir of hell."

On shipboard a great storm arose. How often a storm has proved a blessing in disguise! Wesley, with others, was greatly alarmed. In the midst of the storm he saw some pious Moravians singing psalms and perfectly composed in their conduct. Wesley had enough of the Baconian spirit to note this strange phenomenon. As soon as the storm subsided he asked these Moravian brethren how they had found the peace which he had sought in vain. They tried again to show Wesley the difference be-

tween Paul's futile struggles as a Pharisee to make himself righteous before God by good works, and Paul's spiritual peace and joyous service after he had accepted salvation as a free gift of God through faith. Paul's letters now began to take on a new meaning to Wesley. Nor did the scholarly hero desert these humble Christians on reaching London. On the contrary, he sought the counsel of Peter Böhler, and followed his directions. He told his friends that he had failed in his enterprise, and that he was now seeking salvation by faith under the direction of the Moravians. His brother Charles, who came to London to meet him, was at first angry at his brother's apparent depreciation of the rites of the Church of England and of his own righteousness. But Charles was more emotional than John, and under John's teaching was soon convinced of his own lack of peace; and on May 21, 1738, Charles found the New Testament way of life through faith in Jesus Christ. Three days later, May 24, 1738, when

John Wesley was thirty-five years old, he opened his Bible on Sunday and read the encouraging passage, "Thou art not far from the kingdom." He went to St. Paul's, and was greatly comforted by the anthem, which was a rendition of one of the wonderful psalms of the Old Testament. Sunday evening he went to the Aldersgate Street Chapel, where the Moravians worshiped. There he heard Luther's preface to the Romans read by a Moravian brother. While listening to Luther's explanation of salvation by faith, John Wesley simply accepted the justification and sanctification which God freely offered him through Christ, and bore witness to his salvation. He wrote in his Journal that night: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and I then testified openly to all there what I then

felt for the first time." On that day Martin Luther won his greatest convert.

But while Wesley has now found the true way of life, after thirteen years of obedience of the will, even yet the path is not unclouded. Wesley records in his Journal for May 24th, the day of his conversion, that on the same night after retiring, he "was much buffeted with temptations which returned again and again." May 25th, "the enemy injected a fear" that the change was not great enough, and therefore his faith not real. On May 31st the Journal reads: "Grieved the Spirit of God not only by not watching unto prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness instead of tender love of one who was not sound in the faith. Immediately God hid his face, and I was much troubled." At the same time, Wesley is involved in a controversy with William Law, which Tyerman calls, "A miserable squabble, into which Wesley foolishly rushed, and out of

which he came not victorious, but vanquished. It was an unfortunate commencement of a new Christian life." But while Wesley is still struggling, nevertheless he is making rapid progress. Eighteen days after the Aldersgate experience, Wesley preaches at St. Mary's, Oxford, before the university, on the text, "By grace are ye saved through faith." It was a clear and remarkable statement to the world of the new doctrine of evangelical Christianity which Wesley had just experienced. Three days later, Wesley leaves England for Germany that he may see Count Zinzendorf, the head of the Moravian Brotherhood, and learn the way of life more perfectly. It is at least striking that, after an examination by the Count and the Brotherhood, they would not permit Wesley to partake of the communion with them on the ground that he is a man of "perturbed spirit," and also that "his head has gained the ascendency over his heart." Wesley received some help from Count Zinzendorf, but more

from Christian David, a devout German Pietist of remarkable spiritual insight, and still more from the Moravian Brothers, whom he questioned closely, and whose experience threw light upon his own. He returned to London, and began preaching daily the new doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. He was remarkably successful in awakening men to repentance and in bringing them to conversion. But he was obliged to break more and more with the Moravians, who emphasized the Divine element in conversion to the neglect of the human conditions. Wesley was also much buffeted at times by inward temptations, and he seemed by no means clear as to his own spiritual state. Hence, when his older brother wrote him on his return from Germany, chiding him severely for reflecting on the Wesley family and on the Church of England by affirming that he was not converted until he met a set of German fanatics, Wesley calmly answered his brother by affirming that he was not yet a Christian.

Again in his Journal for January 4, 1739, seven months after the date fixed for his regeneration and the witness of the Spirit, Wesley writes: "My friends affirm that I am mad because I said I was not a Christian a year ago. I affirm I am not a Christian now. Indeed, what I might have been I know not, had I been faithful to the grace then given, when, expecting nothing less, I received such a sense of the forgiveness of my sins as till then I never knew. But that I am not a Christian at this day I as assuredly know as that Jesus is the Christ; for a Christian is the one who has the fruits of the Spirit of Christ, which are love, peace, joy. But these I have not. I have not any love of God. I feel this moment that I do not love God; which, therefore, I know because I feel it. And I know it also by St. John's plain rule: 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' For I love the world. I desire the things of the world, some or other of them; and have done so all my life." He con-

cludes more self-examination in the same spirit by the statement, "Though I have constantly used all the means of grace for twenty years, I am not a Christian."

It is at least striking that Wesley mentions no date in his Journal, and indeed makes no entry of any definite period, when he became a Christian. The entry last read expresses his conviction of the fact that he is not a Christian on the date of January 4, 1739. Wesley, however, is undismayed by his own clouded vision. He pushes on resolutely, obedient to such light as he has, and pointing out to others the way of life as he learns it from the New Testament. Gradually the peace increases in his own soul, and he becomes more and more conscious of the Divine help. The following entry in the Journal of January 12, 1741, shows a full consciousness of the presence of God in the heart of this tireless worker: "In the evening our souls were so filled with the spirit of prayer and thanksgiving, I could scarce tell how to expound, till I

found where it is written, 'My song shall be always of the lovingkindness of the Lord.' " Again, on January 30th, he writes: "In the afternoon I spent a sweet hour in prayer with some hundreds of our society."

And so the Journal runs on, filled with the struggles and victories which this man is winning for humanity, but seldom mentioning himself or referring to his own experience. But the Journal is filled with such a tone of confidence from 1740 until 1790 that no reader can be in doubt of the presence and power of God in the life of this devoted son. It closes October 24, 1790, with the following characteristic words: "I explained to a numerous congregation at Spitalfields Church, 'The Whole Armour of God.' St. Paul's, Shadwell, was still more crowded in the afternoon while I enforced the important truth, 'One Thing is Needful;' and I hope many even then resolved to choose the better part."

The confusion as to the date of Wesley's

conversion emphasizes two facts: First, it proves that religion is not an isolated phenomenon, a divine blessing dropped down from heaven into a human soul on some particular day and hour without any human preparation, needing no human co-operation and completion, and transcending all human doubt. Just as the Bible is a divinely human book—full of human elements, but bearing indisputable tokens of the Divine Presence—so Christianity is a divinely human life, the life of man brooded over and transformed by the Spirit of God. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." Wesley's experience demonstrates, in the second place, that while Christianity is a divinely human product, with the two elements so interwoven that it is difficult to tell where the human ends and the Divine begins, nevertheless it is not merely a subjective experience. It has objective reality. It is divinely valid. Wesley knew

that his experience was not a delusion, because it brought him peace such as he had never known before. He knew that it came from the Author of his being, because it exactly matched the nature which that Author had created. It found him at greater depths of his being than any other experience of his life. It enabled him more fully to reach his ideals than any other power which had ever mastered him. The neighbors knew that Wesley's experience was of God, and not a personal delusion, because it transformed a small and somewhat impertinent meddler in morals into a tireless reformer and the most effective Christian worker England has ever known. "By their fruits ye shall know them." You and I may know that Wesley's experience was of God, because it is certified by the Bible—a book which has been proved true by millions throughout the ages; a book which may be tested and verified by any one eager to know the truth to-day—"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall

know of the teaching." John Wesley thus reached the scientific solution of the soul's salvation and perfection, viz.: Its acceptance of Jesus Christ and its union with God through him. "For there is no other name given under heaven among men wherein we must be saved."

In the third place Wesley's life before and after thirty-five demonstrates the remarkable increase of peace and of power which follows the experience of salvation by grace through faith. As a matter of fact Wesley down to thirty-five like Paul down to the Damascus experience, had sought salvation through good works. The fatal flaw in self-reliance and salvation by obedience to the laws of the universe, whether through morality outside the Church or the Roman Catholic struggle for sainthood inside the Church, is that it is impossible of achievement; and if achieved it would leave the soul self-centered and finite and lost. Salvation by grace, upon the other hand, instead of leaving the seeker self-centered,

transfers the center of personality from self to God. This does not lead to pantheism, or to the swallowing up of human personality in the Divine. Upon the contrary, the New Testament exhausts language in attempting to tell how the Infinite becomes incarnated in the finite until each of us is filled with all the fullness of God. This is the everlasting miracle of the new birth.

Nor did Wesley permit his followers to rest in a salvation achieved once for all even by Christ. The greatest anomaly in Christendom—the one hindrance to the speedy conversion of the world—is the failure of the Christian to use the infinite resources placed at his command. The majority of Roman Catholics live in known disobedience to the teachings of the Church and trust in extreme unction to save them from the consequences of their sins; and, in case of a final oversight, in prayers for the dead to save their souls from purgatory. The great majority of Protestant Church members continue in known sin and rely

upon the blood of Christ for a mechanical salvation as Catholics rely upon the mass. But Wesley, in his doctrine of Christian perfection, taught the converted man to press onward for sanctification. He urged each believer to yield so fully to Christ as to be able to say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." He led his followers into the pentecostal dispensation and prophesied that the indwelling Spirit would prove sufficient for deliverance from every known sin; yea, equal to the casting down of every high imagination and the bringing of every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. Such a deliverance seems impossible to the vast majority of Church members. But try it and you will find your finite strength re-enforced by the Infinite One, and you will see how Wesley has blazed the path for the forward movement of the twentieth century.

During the next half century, Wesley devoted himself, with a singleness of aim, with an industry and cheerfulness unparalleled

in history, to preaching the doctrines of salvation by grace through faith, of the witness of the Spirit, and of Christian perfection. He traveled two hundred and fifty thousand miles, chiefly on horseback; preached forty-two thousand times; wrote in whole or in part and published two hundred and eighty-nine volumes; earned a small fortune by his books, and spent it all for others, dying worth less than $500; organized a Church numbering at his death, one hundred and thirty-five thousand members, now numbering in all its regular and collateral branches some eight million members and sixteen million additional adherents—a Church whose altars belt the globe with a zone of prayer and an atmosphere of praise, and whose activities are as ceaseless as the sun's.

God's means are infinite, and he can readily dispense with any human agent. But it is as difficult for us to foresee what would have been the history of the Anglo-Saxon peoples without John Wesley as to

foresee what the Roman Catholic Church would have been without Augustine, Protestantism without Luther, or the early Christian Church without Paul. As the centuries go by, Wesley's work will shine out more and more, like that of Luther and Paul, because, like them, he became a worker together with God.

CHAPTER IV

Goethe

THE immortality of Goethe's writings is due to the fact that they are the transcript of a soul. Indeed, so human was Goethe's experience, so deep his meditation, and so perfect his art, that his poems have become in some measure the representative literature of our sinful race—a sort of secular Bible, portraying the varying stages of the soul's retrogression and progress up to, but not including, sainthood. Penetrating beneath the forms of literature upon the one side, and of institutions upon the other, we find Goethe and Wesley working upon the same problem, viz.: The birth, growth, and perfection of the human spirit.

Goethe was born in 1749, and died at the age of eighty-three. He sprang from a

prosperous middle-class family. From his father he inherited the strength of will which enabled him to hold himself for a lifetime to his literary tasks, despite the distractions of a pleasure-loving court. But, like Wesley, Goethe owed more to his mother than to his father. From her he inherited in a large measure the joyous nature and lively sympathy and flow of language and vivid imagination, without which he could never have been a poet. At the time of his birth his father was thirty-nine years old, and his mother eighteen; so that mother and son were more nearly of one age than husband and wife; and the mother became the playmate and companion and inspirer of her son, but not his spiritual counselor or monitor. Had Goethe's mother been a Susannah Wesley, then through this gifted son the Reformation might have come to its intended fruition and the history of modern Germany been widely different.

Goethe's educational advantages, like

Wesley's, were unusual. He was admirably prepared at Frankfort-on-the-Main, entered Leipsic University young, and took his Doctor's degree at Strasburg at the age of twenty-two. During his student residence at Strassburg, Goethe's writing was influenced by the French, the clearest and most polished language of Europe; and this influence, combined with the clearness of his mind, the brilliancy of his imagination, and the warmth of his sympathies, made Goethe's style a new phenomenon in German literature. Enjoying the financial comfort and social standing of his parents, the intellectual opportunities of Frankfort, Leipsic, and Strassburg; of fine form and of imperial but gracious manners; unusually popular in social and literary circles; with the hopefulness of youth and his own peculiar optimism,—what wonder that the young man, like Napoleon, first adopted the worldling's solution of the problems of life? Be a hero and a patriot, win victories for your country and yourself,

is the philosophy which finds embodiment in his first poem, "Goetz von Berlichingen." It was written when he was twenty-two and published when he was twenty-four. The book ran through Germany like wildfire. It caused the blood to tingle in the veins of every son of the Fatherland. It created the ideal which was later realized in the German Empire. Stein and Bismarck, and William I and William II are but modern transcripts of Goethe's German hero of the Middle Ages; so that Goethe's first poem became in some measure the creator of modern Germany.

But the heart of youth is filled with varying moods. The reaction from the production of "Goetz" resulted in deep depression. Goethe had the open-mindedness of a scientist; and perhaps he saw that the high qualities and unvarying success of his hero were not in reach of humanity at large, and that, therefore, his poem was onesided and imperfect. Moreover, while Goethe had no notion of marriage at this

time, nevertheless he fell violently in love with Charlotte Buff, who was engaged to his dearest friend, Kestner. His grief was so poignant that he suddenly left Wetzlar without bidding his friends good-bye, and became a wanderer in Germany. Just at this time his college classmate, Jerusalem, whose troubles were no deeper than his own, committed suicide. Worst of all, Goethe himself was leading an impure life; and both his artistic and his manly instincts were in revolt against his self-indulgence. While he had conquered the nation, he had not subdued his own appetites, and the acclaims of the people seemed to him to sound forth his own hypocrisy. His emotions melted his brilliant style into soft and melodious numbers; and only two years after Goethe had written the poem which immortalizes the hopefulness of life, he produced "The Sorrows of Werther," the highest literary embodiment of the storm-and-stress period of youth. "Werther" was published within a year of "Goetz;" and the nation,

which was ringing with his praises, was again startled—this time by a cry of despair more piercing than had been his note of victory. At first the people protested angrily that their hero had become a coward, that their prophet was predicting doom. But the children of the Reformation had backslidden; and sinners are at heart unhappy. Hence, as the people turned from the triumphs of "Goetz" to the "Sorrows of Werther," presently they too began to weep. "Werther" was followed by a flood of sentimental literature. Scores of young men committed suicide with this poem in their bosoms; and Goethe bought a dagger, and confessed later that he was saved from self-destruction only by his fear of what might lie beyond the grave.

But while days of despair may be expected during the turbulent period of youth, no vigorous mind will abide in skepticism. It will arrange a *modus vivendi,* and Goethe now adopted the compromise philosophy of the worldling. God had not left the most

promising youth in Germany without light. He permits no soul to sink into sin until he has at least shown that soul its duty through the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world. Soon after Goethe had returned from Strassburg, stained by sin, he met Fraulein von Klettenberg, a Moravian maiden, who was greatly attracted to him. She was older than he, and her interest was one-quarter sisterly, one-quarter religious, and full half maiden love. But her conscience and her purity made her superior to his temptations. She died when Goethe was twenty-five, and our hero sadly wrote: "My Klettenberg is dead, before I knew she was seriously ill. Dead and buried in my absence, she who was so dear, so much to me!" The image of her unspotted soul arose upon his vision, and he wondered whether he, too, might not gain help from on high to enable him to live a pure life. In Book VI of "Wilhelm Meister," Goethe immortalized the Mora-

vian maiden in "The Confession of a Beautiful Soul."

But Goethe, unlike Wesley, is unwilling to make the supreme surrender. He still holds that the great end of life is the perfection of the spirit. But he does not expect too rapid progress, and he does not seek immediate deliverance from known sin. He now falls under Satan's own temptation, and thinks that sinful experiences will enlarge the soul, and contribute to spiritual wisdom. His self-indulgence paralyzes his activity, while his artistic instincts revolt against the embodiment of the compromise philosophy in a poem. Poetry is idealism; and when it ceases to embody the ideal, it ceases to be poetry. Hence the poet, while slowly working on "Wilhelm Meister," remains silent for fourteen years. But Goethe is a Samson even in his sins. He chafes under the slight trammels of German social life. He goes to Rome, sinks deeper into sensuality, and proclaims him-

self a pagan in philosophy and life. He returns to Germany, and shocks the semi-monogamous court of Weimar by openly taking Christiane Vulpius—a German peasant girl—to live with himself outside the bonds of wedlock.

The old impulse to express what he has lived is still upon him, and he now boldly plans a great poem to be styled "Mohammed," in which he intends to show that even religion must rest upon a compromise, and that Mohammedanism, springing from a union of the spiritual and the sensual in man, is better adapted to human nature than is Christianity. The poem would have been a Mormon Bible in literary dress, and by an author who at least confessed its human origin, and not, like the present Book of Mormon, a filthy literary hodgepodge by a hypocrite claiming a revelation from God. What a compliment to Christianity that Goethe professed paganism when he sank into sensuality, and selected Mohammed,

not Christ, as the hero of his compromise philosophy!

But Goethe is in a universe of law. He lives in a world under a moral government. He has too much of the scientific spirit to shut his eyes permanently upon the facts of life. Hence, the great poem on Mohammed never appears. The compromise philosophy found its embodiment in the first six books of "Wilhelm Meister," completed when Goethe was thirty-seven, and in Part I of "Faust," published as a fragment when Goethe was forty-one. These are strange books, full of good and evil. Upon the whole, I accept the judgment of Emerson that "Faust," and more especially "Wilhelm Meister," is a disagreeable and a painful book. It is a poem of the actual, and not of the ideal; a portrayal of the weaknesses of human nature, and not of its possibilities; a product of the earth, and not inspired from heaven.

But Part I of "Faust" marks a distinct

spiritual transition from the stage of compromise to that of law. Dr. A. H. Strong, of Rochester, who, upon the whole, is too severe on Goethe, nevertheless says, "'Faust' is one of the greatest poems of the world because the first part involves the sublime truths of human freedom, sin, guilt, and retribution. The restlessness of a selfish spirit, the impossibility of satisfying its longings with the things of time and sense, the ever-increasing complications of shame and misery in which the sinner involves himself, the ruin which all unconsciously he spreads around him, have never been portrayed more powerfully than in the first part of 'Faust.' Marguerite's love is made the means of her transgression. Her sin brings death to her mother, to her brother, and to her child. In the great cathedral where she goes to seek forgiveness, the consciousness of guilt chokes back her prayer, and she falls fainting as she hears the solemn reverberation of the '*Dies Iræ*.'" In the closing scene, Gretchen is

lying in the dungeon, awaiting execution for drowning her baby. Faust, by the aid of Mephistopheles, gains access to her cell, prepared to help her escape. But the strain of her approaching execution and the weight of her guilt have turned the poor girl's brain, and she indulges in snatches of song, Ophelia-like, instead of fleeing with her lover. On hearing the jailers at work upon the scaffold, Faust grows frantic, and Mephistopheles now reveals himself as Satan, and drags Faust off into outer darkness, and leaves Gretchen to her fate. What is this terrible picture but an enlarged edition of the Seventh Commandment? Goethe here reaches the Old Testament stage of the law. He had dreamed for a while that he had become a pagan in his philosophy and life. But conscience was not yet dead in this child of the Reformation. Goethe was clear-headed enough to see, and honest enough to proclaim, that the wages of sin is death.

Goethe has lived through, and portrayed,

the stages of hopefulness, of despair, of compromise, and of law. Will he bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and advance to the stage of grace? Goethe has lived for seventeen years with Christiane Vulpius, and she is the mother of his children, all of whom are dead save one. The French invasion of Germany, when he was fifty-seven years old, brings him to a decision to marry Christiane. Society is shocked at the suggestion that the greatest man in Europe should publicly confess his sin by marrying a peasant woman, and acknowledging her child as his own. Christiane was always ignorant, and she long since lost her beauty, and now she was becoming a drunkard. Goethe knew that Christiane was drinking to drown the sorrow and the shame which he had brought upon her, and, in face of the protest of the court, he made such pitiable atonement as lay within his power by marrying her. He saw their son go down to a drunkard's grave at thirty, and his wife become a

drunken scold. But Goethe loved her to the end, and, when she lay dying, Goethe begged and entreated and prayed her not to leave him. Here was some fruit meet for repentance. I wish that, like David, Goethe had put this penitence into song.

But Goethe now recognizes that Christianity goes beyond repentance. He helps a discouraged student who is on the point of suicide; he educates a Swiss orphan boy, Philip Imbaumgartner; he denies himself in order to help Herder's children at the very time when Herder is publicly criticising his writings and his life; and Goethe records the high and lasting pleasure which arises from the service of others.

At last, after years of meditation and deeper experience, between fifty-nine and eighty, Goethe slowly completed Part II of "Faust," which he added to Part I—I have sometimes thought in imitation of the New Testament added to the Old. After depicting Faust as coming back to earth again, Goethe represents him as

abandoning self-indulgence for the service of others. He teaches his neighbors a more scientific method of mining, and reclaims for posterity a large tract from the sea. While thus engaged, Faust grows old and feeble and blind. But Goethe pictures this unselfish service of others as bringing the old man that peace and blessedness which young Faust had sought in vain, and so he says:

> "Then dare I hail the moment fleeing,—
> Ah! still delay, thou art so fair!"

But by the contract in Part I, Mephistopheles is to serve Faust until the latter experiences one moment of happiness so complete that he wishes it to last longer. Faust has just confessed to such a moment. Hence, Satan touches him, and Faust dies. But as Satan had not secured this happiness for Faust, as it had come rather through obedience to the teachings of Christ, Goethe represents Mephistopheles as securing the body only, while angels bear the spirit heavenward.

Shortly after the publication of Part II, Goethe, in conversation with Eckerman, quotes the following passage:

> "The noble spirit now is free
> And saved from Satan's scheming.
> Whoe'er aspires unweariedly,
> Is not beyond redeeming.
> And if he feels the grace of God,
> Which from on high is given,
> The blessed hosts that wait above,
> Shall welcome him to heaven."

"In these lines," added Goethe, "the key to Faust's rescue may be found—in Faust himself an ever higher and purer form of activity to the end; and the Eternal Love coming down to his aid." "This," adds Goethe, "is in entire harmony with our Christian ideas, according to which we are not saved by our own strength, but by the freely bestowed grace of God." We thus know not only from the analysis of his writings, but from his own statements, that Goethe finally reached the Christian solution of the problem of life.

We must recognize the fact that, for religious uses, there is so much chaff with the wheat as to make Goethe's writings unprofitable to most students. The moral influence of his writings is mixed, when not wholly evil. Carlyle, who was morally sound, but out of sympathy with the orthodoxy of his day, says, "I learned from Goethe to seek, not happiness, but the cross of Christ." On the other hand, George Eliot was doubtless encouraged in her illicit relations with Mr. Lewes by Goethe's writings, of which she was the English translator. On a large scale, "Goetz" created modern Germany, while "Werther" and "Wilhelm Meister" and Goethe's own conduct have paralyzed German patriotism, and helped to keep his native land from her providential goal.

Our criticism of Goethe, therefore, is that he taught the race several false solutions of the problem of life before he reached the true solution. It is a somewhat tardy discharge of one's moral responsibilities to find

the true plan of life only at sixty, and to give it to the world at eighty. Again it stands against Goethe that, after waiting sixty years for an experience out of which to construct the poem of the soul's perfection, he was forced to write his final song without a clear experience of salvation by grace, much less of Christian perfection. And so Part II of "Faust" becomes a song of redemption, and not of perfection—a song of redemption, with so little confessed penitence and faith that some have failed to recognize even redemption in the poem. But is it not much to find this hero of the Agnostics, this king of modern culture; the man who ranks with Shakespeare and Dante and Homer in literature; the man who gave sixty years to the problem of the soul's perfection,—is it not much to find Goethe coming at last, after a long and painful journey, up the steeps of Calvary, and dropping his burden at the foot of the cross?

CHAPTER V

The Comparison

But how shall we compare these two giants of the eighteenth century, who are still molding the thoughts and lives of men? In literary achievement we must certainly pass the palm to Goethe. The Encyclopædia Britannica says. "As Homer concentrated in himself the spirit of antiquity, Dante of the Middle Ages, Shakespeare of the Renaissance, so Goethe is the representative of the modern spirit, the prophet of the nineteenth century, the appointed teacher of ages yet unborn."

Wesley wrote vastly more in quantity than did Goethe. It is possible, also, that some of Wesley's writings are more widely read, and that they influence more profoundly the lives of their readers, than do

Goethe's poems. I am sure that Wesley reached a far truer solution of the problem of spiritual perfection, the problem to which both men gave their lives, than did Goethe. In literary form, also, the naked strength of Wesley's writings place them by the side of the writings of Franklin and Washington, of Darwin and Newton. They are models of clearness and brevity and strength. But this, I think, is all that can be said of them. They lack the imaginative and artistic qualities needed to give them rank as literature. Indeed, in the realm of pure literature, in the realm of Homer and Æschylus, and Dante and Cervantes, and Shakespeare and Goethe, Wesley has no seat.

As a purely speculative philosopher, also, Wesley ranks low. Professor R. T. Stevenson shows that he lacked originality. His theological and philosophical essays, first published in the *Arminian Magazine*, have never been republished; and they would not find a sale if placed upon the market to-day.

Wesley declares that the giving up of witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible. His political philosophy is defective. He sided with George III against the independence of the United States. His "Calm Address to our American Colonies" is largely borrowed from Dr. Johnson; and it shows none of that grasp of political problems which characterizes the speeches of Pitt and Burke. Upon the most important doctrine which emerges in a comparison of Wesley and Goethe, that of spiritual perfection, Wesley is infinitely the clearer, and his practical directions are yet unchallenged. But his reasoning is not always convincing, and his philosophy is defective, or, at least, is incomplete. Possibly the New Testament in its doctrines of freedom and providence, of faith and works, reveals the pillars of spiritual life across which the human reason can not yet spring the arches of spiritual philosophy.

But when we turn from speculation to action, from words to deeds, and especially

when we consider the progress which Wesley and Goethe respectively made in solving the problem of spiritual perfection, the Englishman outranks the German. He reached at thirty-five the solution of the problem which his compeer reached between sixty-five and eighty; and he has made clear to succeeding generations the secret of spiritual peace which only a painful study can extract from Goethe's writings. In order to avoid bias at this point, let us quote the opinion of others. Mr. Lecky, in his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," devotes more space to John Wesley than he gives to any king, statesman, or general, on the ground that, in his own language, "Wesley represents the deep, permanent, and expanding forces of the age in which he lived." Cardinal Manning, the highest English authority in the Roman Catholic Church, pronounced John Wesley the greatest man modern England has produced. James Freeman Clarke, an authority in the Unitarian Church,

so far as that Church recognizes any authority, says, "The Christian Church has produced only three men of the highest type,—Paul, Luther, and Wesley;" and he adds that, while Wesley must be named last in the order of time, he can not be placed third even in this small group in the order of greatness. Southey writes, "John Wesley will exercise more influence centuries, and probably millenniums hence, than perhaps any other man of his age."

The characters of the two men justify the higher estimate of Wesley. Goethe never achieved the complete mastery of his passions, or, at least, not until late in life. Do not understand that he was devoid of will power. In publishing "Werther," in his contempt of public opinion over the war with France, in his devotion to his literary tasks, and in his marriage with Christiane Vulpius, Goethe showed an independence of character and a will power which were heroic. But while Goethe was a giant in will, his passions were Titanic, and still

mastered him. Wesley, upon the contrary, surpassed every man of his age in his power of self-control. If we look back beyond his age, or forward to our own century, the calm-faced Methodist preacher is still supreme. He surpassed Lincoln and Washington, and Luther and Alfred the Great, in power to hold himself for a lifetime to the accomplishment of the highest moral tasks. In the unwavering devotion of his will to the highest spiritual ends, and in the achievement of practical Christian perfection, probably John Wesley has had no superior since the Master trod the earth.

When we turn to the results accomplished, we find that moral energy is vastly superior as a working force to intellectual power. We have said that Wesley does not rank with Kant and Hegel in philosophy. But Wesley produced two results in modern theology which surpass in intellectual brilliancy and fruitfulness the philosophical achievements of these German masters: First, Wesley applied the same method of

observation and experiment to religious phenomena which Francis Bacon applied to material phenomena. The method originated with Christ. The Master gave us the experimental method in declaring that, if any man willed to do his will, he should know of the teaching. Sixteen hundred years after Christ, Bacon found the Schoolmen engaged in *a priori* speculations in regard to the material universe. In the investigation of physical phenomena, Bacon substituted the method of experiment for abstract speculation, and thus became the father of modern science.

One hundred and fifty years after Bacon, Wesley found the method of the Schoolmen still dominant in the Church. Whether Wesley borrowed from Bacon or went directly back to Christ, I can not say; but Wesley did for theology exactly what Bacon did for science. He introduced the experimental method into religious speculation. Bacon's emphasis of experiment in the physical sciences is matched by Wesley's em-

phasis of experience in religion. Wesley by no means confined his doctrine of experience to subjective religious states. No man was more practical. He denied the possibility of the witness of the Spirit without the fruits of the Spirit. He judged doctrines and emotions by their results in the lives of men. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Wesley thus, unconsciously I think, inaugurated a revolution in theology, as Bacon inaugurated a revolution in the physical sciences. The most important theological movement in Germany during the last forty years is Ritschlianism; and Ritschlianism is simply a halting attempt to base Christianity upon experience instead of upon philosophy. A score of recent volumes upon Apologetics like "Gesta Christi," "Christian Missions and Social Progress," "Evidence of Christian Experience," etc., are outgrowths of Wesleyanism, and are simply attempts to furnish an external scientific basis for religion. Wesley's method will dominate the theological thinking of the

twentieth century as Bacon's method has dominated the scientific progress of the nineteenth century. The experimental method will place our spiritual teachings upon the same foundation which the physical sciences now occupy. In view of these results, Wesley will take his place by the side of Darwin and Bacon and Augustine as one of those providential men who mold the thinking of later ages.

Second; we must remember that, while Bacon unfolded the true method of science, he did not himself apply his method and make any great discovery or invention. But just as Newton applied the scientific method to the discovery of the law of gravitation, and Darwin to the discovery of the doctrine of evolution, so Wesley applied the experimental method to discover for the Anglo-Saxon peoples the Arminian theology, the "golden mean" between Calvinism upon the one side and Unitarianism on the other. The Wesleyan doctrine of personal freedom and responsibility and the personal

consciousness of God's presence accounts, in part at least, not only for the spread of Methodism, but for the expansion of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. With the world becoming one neighborhood, Christianity will secure the leadership of the race in the twentieth century; and that Christianity will be Protestant Christianity, and English-speaking Protestant Christianity. But of Protestant English-speaking Churches, W. T. Stead affirms that the Church of England and Methodism lead the world; the former with 23,000,000 adherents in all, and the latter with 25,000,000 adherents. If Wesley gave us an organization and a spiritual philosophy which, in one hundred and fifty years, is enabling Methodism to mold a larger population than the Established Church, which in the United States gives us eight times the following of the mother Church, it is at least possible that Methodism may become the religious leader of the world. *The Pilot,* the most brilliant Anglican journal, says, "The future of Russian

orthodoxy and the future of American Methodism, when they emerge, as they some time must slowly emerge, from the mist, are probably of more interest and importance to the human race than the future of the Roman Catholic or the Anglican or the Lutheran Church."

At the time when England was asleep on slavery, John Wesley denounced it as the "sum of all villanies." He is the father of public libraries, of free dispensaries, of hospitals, and of savings banks. John Wesley created the manhood in England which has stayed the ravages of the French Revolution on the one side, and, on the other side, has made England the freest government on earth. He preached the application of the Golden Rule to every form of business, and he thus furnishes the sovereign remedy for the solution of the difficulties of labor and capital in the twentieth century. John Wesley is the most modern man of the twentieth century, because his life and plans are rooted in God and have the freshness

of eternity. The relative influence of the two men on their respective countries is seen in the fact that, in Germany, Protestant Christianity is not quite so earnest and evangelistic as at the death of Luther; whereas, in England, the halting reformation of Henry VIII has moved on to its providential goal. In the world at large the relative influence of the two men upon civilization is seen in the fact that eighty-five per cent of all Protestant missionaries who are advancing the borders of the kingdom of Christ on earth are Englishmen and Americans; and the English language, not the German, is belting the globe to-day and molding the life of the twentieth century.

Great, therefore, as is our German cousin, we do not hesitate to compare with him our English brother whose practical genius enabled him to give to the modern Church the Baconian method of progress through experience, and by that method to revolutionize the Augustinian theology and give the

Anglo-Saxon peoples a philosophy of life suited to their talents and fitting them for the conquest of the world. In a word, Goethe was Germany, and Germany in the eighteenth century was intellect. Wesley was England, and England was will. The Germans were the schoolmasters of the modern world; the Anglo-Saxons led the world after it was out of school. Goethe represented the world of culture, Wesley the world of action. Goethe stood for the broadest and richest speculations of the modern mind; but he caught the higher vision of the soul's possibilities in Christ only in his later years, and he never trod the mountain-heights of holiness. Wesley represented the highest spiritual activity of his people. That practical genius which the Anglo-Saxons have brought to bear upon continents and races, John Wesley devoted to the conquest of souls for Christ. But the difference between the two men is more than racial. It is not simply or chiefly that between an Englishman and a German; for

the two races are cousins. The fundamental difference is that between the Christian and the worldling: for it was after he passed the period of literary activity that Goethe accepted the Christian philosophy of life. The greater value of Wesley's achievements was due to his greater capacity for God. The supreme difference arises from the fact that Goethe was self-centered while Wesley was God-centered. In comparing the results of their activity, therefore, we are pitting the highest achievements of human culture against the achievements of a culture equally broad, and of a saner judgment, re-enforced by God. The latter excel the former as the Infinite outweighs the finite.

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